

Statement regarding
The reauthorization of the Farm Bill

July 17th Farm Bill Hearing

Staunton, Virginia

The House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte
Chairman

Presented by

Dan King
Farmer from Rockingham County, Virginia

Good morning. Thanks you Chairman Goodlatte and members of this committee for the opportunity to reflect with you on some of the issues I feel are important as we look at reauthorizing the farm bill. While I was a member of the Virginia Poultry Federation in the past the comments I make here today are my own. Yet as I interact with my fellow farmers at coop meetings, young farmer activities or just visiting over the bed of a pickup truck I am aware that these views are shared by many of my farming friends. Thank you for your interest and active involvement with the agricultural community during this time of reauthorization. We need your strong leadership in this important process to ensure that a new bill will be in place in a timely fashion. We can not afford to have the current bill expire without a new bill in place.

My name is Dan King. My Wife Janet and I are first Generation Farmers. We operate a 550 acre poultry and beef farm north of Harrisonburg, Virginia. It is a family farm with our three teen age sons heavy involved in the operation.

Poultry is an important part of our farming operation. Traditionally when we think of the needs of the poultry industry as related to the farm bill we think of insuring an adequate feed supply, opening up markets and providing EQIP funds. These are important issues in the poultry industry but a successful farm bill must make sure that each segment of the nation's agricultural economy is vibrant for the bill to be a success.

I am a strong supporter of renewable energy. And while, in a global economy, I have concerns of the lower net efficiencies of carbohydrate production when compared to cellulose production of ethanol, the current path in this country is the use of carbohydrates. With the certain explosion

of ethanol production from corn and bio-diesel from soybeans the new farm bill will need to make adjustments in the CRP and maintain de-coupled payments to ensure an adequate supply of feed stocks for the poultry industry.

I'm certain these types of issues have been testified to at length so I would like to spend the rest of my time bring up issues that I believe are important to all sectors of agriculture.

- Security
- Super Fund Liability
- Eminent Domain - Open Space
- Inheritance Taxes

In today's climate security is on everyone's mind. For the farmer concerns over security go beyond our borders and transportation systems. The spread of diseases and pathogens, whether by natural or intentional means, are a concern for all in agriculture. Having served on the Avian Influenza Taskforce in Virginia in 2002 I can insure you that there is a continual need for strong federal leadership in this area. These issues must continue to be addressed in the next farm bill.

As a conservationist, I do want clean air and water, and I have done a lot on my farm to improve the environment. I do not however feel that Super Fund legislation was ever intended to impact the family farm. Just last year I was "threatened" by an EPA official. I was told that I'm the type of high profile person the agency would like to use as a public example. At issue was whether or not I was going to pay a fine and admit to violating a non-existent standard on ammonium emissions. In exchange they would offer me amnesty while they use my fine money to determine my ammonium

emissions. This is not the type of treatment we expect from our government agencies. The new farm bill and other legislation must do all it can to protect us from being harassment by governmental agencies and environment extremist.

In a related area, those of us with a passion for agriculture must use every opportunity we have to promote a limited use of Eminent Domain and a clear definition of open space. Just last week I caught a headline that a community had used emanate domain to condemn a farm. They were doing it because they felt they needed more open space. Couple this with the recent Supreme Court ruling and we need well written legislation that limits government's right to use eminent domain and defines open space. Land that is used for production agriculture is open space!

I know the House recently took action on a bill to raise the exemption for the inheritance taxes. Thanks. Please work to have it become law. Being a farmer in an area where real estate is increasing by moving the dismal point the elimination of the inheritance taxes will be vitally important to preserving a vital agricultural economy.

Thanks again for this opportunity to be engaged in this process. I welcome any questions.